Whales & Wildness: Spring in the Sea of Cortez

April 11-18, 2016
Aboard the National Geographic Sea Lion
“Nowhere else have I seen this variety and number of whales. There are thousands of common dolphins, hundreds of bottlenose dolphins and even the largest animals to ever exist on the planet—blue whales. We may observe fin whales, Bryde’s, humpbacks, sperm whales plus killer whales, pilot whales, beaked whales, false killer whales, pygmy sperm whales and spinner dolphins. In no other place can all these be seen together.”

—JIM KELLEY, EXPEDITION LEADER
Dear UCLA Alumni and Friends,

A rare and incredible gathering occurs in spring in the upper Sea of Cortez. Pods of dolphins form aggregations of thousands of individuals. An amazing variety of whale species—humpback, sperm, fin, Bryde’s, and blue whales—come here, as well as huge schools of manta rays.

Sail the Sea of Cortez with us, April 11-18, 2016, and explore its many islands free from tourist infrastructure and designated a UNESCO World Heritage site. We’ll hike islands where the shores teem with a cacophony of seabirds and kayak into quiet grottoes with unearthly echoes. See scores of blue-footed boobies and pelicans. Snorkel with playful sea lions and head out in an expedition landing craft in search of dolphins. Stroll the streets of Santa Rosalita, a historic mining town, with its wooden houses and church designed by Gustave Eiffel.

Cruising aboard the newly redesigned 62-guest National Geographic Sea Lion, you’ll find that this expedition is crafted with just the right balance of activity and leisure time. Unlike traditional getaways, you’ll travel with a team of expert naturalists, an undersea specialist, and a Lindblad-National Geographic certified photo instructor to gain the deepest appreciation of all that you’ll see. The ship is also outfitted with an array of tools for exploration—expedition landing craft, kayaks, snorkeling gear, an underwater camera, and more. With a flexible itinerary, we’re free to follow the seasonal movements of wildlife to optimize sightings.

I hope you’ll join us for this adventure that is both enriching and fun. You’ll come away from your expedition renewed and with an appreciation of how much a week’s time can change your perspective. To reserve your place, please call us at 310-206-0613.

Sincerely,

Christel Pailet
Director, Alumni Travel

Cover: A fun ride alongside a common dolphin.
Opposite: Humpbacks are just one of the many species of whales seen on this journey.
Ship's registry: United States
With improbably inviting shorelines and crystal-clear waters, it’s easy to call Baja California and the Sea of Cortez a beach destination. It is. But when you explore further, you’ll find that the surprisingly varied habitats and rich, endemic wildlife place it in a class all by itself.

You’ll find the Sea of Cortez bursting with marine life, but virtually empty of humans. In April, it is the best place in the world to see many different kinds of whales in good conditions. The ocean explodes with hundreds of dolphins racing to the ship, and the sea boils as boobies plunge in search of fish. The Sea of Cortez is one of the planet’s richest seas of similar latitude, so it is well deserved that Jacques Cousteau named it “the aquarium of the world.”

Sunset in the Sea of Cortez.

But this Baja expedition offers much more than sea life. Stroll the streets of Santa Rosalita, a historic mining town, and enjoy a visit to a local bakery or gelato shop. Kayak in protected lagoons and observe diverse birdlife along the shores. Join a naturalist aboard an expedition landing craft to explore a deserted island. Hike through an otherworldly forest of gigantic cacti that tower overhead. At the end of the day, relax at a beach barbecue and bask in the splendid solitude of Baja.

Opposite page (clockwise from top): Sperm whale fluke; kayaks enable guests to explore Baja’s many hidden coves; guest photographing the desert’s dramatic landscape; a royal tern takes off. Above: Blue and gold snappers.
The Joys of Baja: Expedition-Style

Our expedition style of travel offers the best way to experience the Sea of Cortez. Since this is an expedition, not a cruise, flexibility is a hallmark. The itinerary draws on the extensive experience in the region of the expedition team and captain to maximize viewing opportunities. If a pod of dolphins approaches us, the ship will change course to take advantage of the encounter. The kitchen can also respond flexibly to an unexpected dinner hour whale sighting and still ensure that your meal will be superb.

You’ll discover that life aboard the 62-guest National Geographic Sea Lion is warm and welcoming, with everyone participating equally in the adventure. Evening Recaps in the lounge are a chance to swap stories of the day’s surprises with family and new friends over hors d’oeuvres and cocktails. Guests often compare the feeling of voyaging aboard this ship to that of a private yacht—with an esprit de corps that can only be found on an expedition.

Cool Tools for Exploration

**EXPEDITION LANDING CRAFT:** These boats are perfect for viewing up close and photographing frolicking dolphins or the antics of sea lions. Land on pristine and otherwise inaccessible desert islands to walk among plants and animals that are found nowhere else.

**KAYAKS:** Kayak along peaceful coastlines in one of the twelve double or eight single kayaks on board. Get a water-level look at stunning scenery.

**SNORKELING:** Don a mask, flippers, and wetsuit, and explore the vibrantly colored undersea realm in these crystal-clear waters. All snorkeling equipment is provided.

**UNDERWATER CAMERA:** See the vibrant marine life without getting wet. An underwater camera can feed live images to the lounge, and often HD underwater videos shot during the day are played in the evening.

**MICROSCOPE:** A video microscope lets you examine the seldom seen and marvel at the intricacies of marine life in new ways.

**HYDROPHONE:** Listen to the awe-inspiring sounds of dolphins in the surrounding waters.

Opposite page (clockwise from top): A family jumps into the Sea of Cortez; undersea specialist captures a sea lion on video to share with guests in the ship’s lounge; National Geographic Sea Lion can easily maneuver to follow playful dolphins; after a beach barbecue, guests gather around a bonfire; wildlife sighting on deck.
Travel with an A+ Expedition Team

Learn, see, and do more by exploring with experts who know the region best. Your team consists of an expedition leader and four naturalists, including a Lindblad-National Geographic certified photo instructor and an undersea specialist. Additionally, a wellness specialist leads morning stretching and aerobic hikes, and a video chronicler films the story of your adventure.

Naturalists are always on hand to point out the wildlife.

The Thrill of Photography in Baja California

Baja California is beautiful, so photography and our expeditions go hand-in-hand. The peerless light where the desert meets the sea offers photographic opportunities unlike any other place on Earth.

Capture moments at the heart of your expedition and learn from the best—a National Geographic photographer who will be on board throughout the expedition. Plus, travel with a Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic certified photo instructor—a naturalist who’s specially trained to help you with your camera’s settings and ensure you go home with the photos of a lifetime. You’ll learn tricks for shooting close-ups of flowering cacti, striking desert and sea landscapes from afar, and capturing the action of rare birds flitting past your lens. Our Baja expedition is perfect for every photographer, from point-and-shoot enthusiasts to burgeoning pros.

Opposite page (clockwise from top): Baja offers endless photo ops; shooting Baja’s stunning sunset; common dolphins; expert photographers share photo tips in small group and even one-on-one settings; brilliant sunrise, Sea of Cortez; sea lion and snorkeler.
Watch whales and dolphins from the deck of an intimate, 62-guest expedition ship and at water level from nimble expedition landing craft. Spring in the Sea of Cortez is the best time to see large pods of dolphins and various species of whales—blue, sperm, humpback, pilot, fin, and Bryde’s—all in the same week. Hike uninhabited beaches and desert landscapes. Observe a myriad of seabirds. Kayak in pristine waters, snorkel among sea lions and reef fish, and enjoy the serenity of a sunset beach barbecue under a starry sky. Plus visit the old mining town of Santa Rosalita, with its wooden homes and a steel church designed by Gustave Eiffel.

This unique journey is designed with a flexible itinerary, with the staff choosing sites based on conditions and to maximize wildlife sightings, adding a stimulating sense of adventure to each day. The expert six-person expedition team will illuminate the wonders of the Sea of Cortez from every possible angle. They are dedicated to ensuring an incredible voyage. You’ll discover the richness of the Sea of Cortez’s marine life all around the ship and with help from an undersea specialist, who shoots video of life beneath the sea. And you’ll see it for yourself when you don snorkeling gear to dive in and swim with playful sea lions.
DAY 1: HOME/LOS CABOS, MEXICO/LA PAZ/EMBARK
Fly into Los Cabos and transfer to La Paz, where you embark ship to set sail on the Sea of Cortez. (D)

DAY 2-7: EXPLORING THE SEA OF CORTEZ
Our routing is designed with flexibility in mind, to maximize opportunities for wildlife sightings. It will most likely include the islands and activities listed below, although the order may vary. (B,L,D daily)

ISLAS SAN ESTEBAN AND SAN PEDRO MÁRTIR:
Walk up a desert wash to search for desert birds and the endemic pinto chuckwalla—a fat, harmless desert lizard. Later visit Isla San Pedro Mártir, a 1,000-foot-high guano-covered island that is home to thousands of seabirds. Blue-footed boobies, red-billed tropicbirds, pelicans, and frigatebirds are all found here.

ISLA RASA:
In the spring, one of the great wildlife spectacles of the Sea of Cortez is in full swing at Isla Rasa—the nesting of thousands of Heermann’s gulls and elegant and royal terns. We will go ashore to meet researchers and unobtrusively observe the behavior of these three species.

ISLA SAN MARCOS:
At Isla San Marcos, there is a beautiful cove for swimming, snorkeling, and kayaking. In the afternoon, we are again in rich whale waters, near the mouth of Bahía Concepción where we stand a good chance of sighting several species of whales, particularly fin or sperm.

ISLA SANTA CATALINA:
This morning we’ll search for whales in the waters south of Isla Carmen, an area that has proven to be one of the best for finding blue whales, and often bottlenose and common dolphins. In the afternoon, we visit Isla Santa Catalina, famous for its giant barrel cactus and lovely cardon cactus forest. The protected bay of our anchorage is also an excellent site for snorkeling. With a full afternoon here, there is time for swimming, snorkeling, and hiking.

LOS ISLOTES AND ISLA ESPÍRITU SANTO:
At Los Islotes, snorkelers have one of life’s great opportunities—swimming with graceful and curious sea lions. With a deeply indented shoreline and dramatically eroded cliff faces, Isla Espíritu Santo is perhaps the most beautiful island in the Sea of Cortez. We have a leisurely afternoon for swimming, snorkeling, kayaking, and in the evening, a beach barbecue under the desert sky.

DAY 8: DISEMBARK/LA PAZ/LOS CABOS/HOME
Disembark in La Paz and transfer to the Los Cabos airport for flights home. (B)
Prices are per person, double occupancy unless indicated as solo.

## ITINERARY

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<th>CAT. 1</th>
<th>CAT. 2</th>
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<th>CAT. 2 SOLO</th>
<th>ADVANCE PAYMENT</th>
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<td>Whales &amp; Wildness: Spring in the Sea of Cortez</td>
<td>$5,990</td>
<td>$6,870</td>
<td>$7,860</td>
<td>$8,990</td>
<td>$10,300</td>
<td>$850</td>
<td>Sample Airfare: Round-trip Los Angeles/Los Cabos/Los Angeles: Economy from $650. Subject to change.</td>
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**National Geographic Sea Lion**

**CAPACITY:** 62 guests in 31 outside cabins. **REGISTRY:** United States.

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 152 feet.

**PUBLIC AREAS:** Ship features a library; global market; lounge with full-service bar and facilities for films, slide shows, and presentations; observation deck; partially covered sundeck with chairs and tables. Our “open bridge” provides guests an opportunity to meet our officers and captain and learn about navigation.

**MEALS:** Served in single seatings with unassigned tables for an informal atmosphere and easy mingling. Breakfast is a wide-selection buffet, and lunch is often served family style. Menu emphasizes local flavors.

**CABINS:** All face outside with windows, private facilities, and climate controls.

**EXPEDITION EQUIPMENT:** Expedition landing craft, kayaks, snorkeling gear, bow camera, hydrophone, Splash-Cam, underwater video camera, and video microscope.

**SPECIAL FEATURES:** Guest Internet access. A video chronicler, Lindblad-National Geographic certified photo instructor, and ship’s doctor on board all voyages.

**WELLNESS:** The vessel is staffed by a wellness specialist and features exercise equipment, LEXspa, and morning stretch classes on the sundeck.
**CATEGORY 1:** Main Deck #300-305 — Conveniently positioned between the dining room and lounge, these cabins feature two single lower beds, a writing desk, and a large view window.

**CATEGORY 2:** Bridge Deck #100-104; Upper Deck #200-212, 215 — These well-located cabins include two lower single beds and a window.

**CATEGORY 3:** Bridge Deck #105, 106; Upper Deck #214, 216, 217, 219 — These cabins feature a seating unit with table and two large view windows. Upper Deck cabins include two lower single beds which can convert to a double bed and a pull-out single bed for a third person; Bridge Deck cabins include two lower single beds only.

**NOTE:** Sole occupancy cabins are available in Categories 1 and 2 only. Third person rates are available in certain categories at one half the double occupancy rate.

**SHARED ACCOMMODATIONS:** Shares can be arranged at the double occupancy rate in Categories 1 and 2 only.

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**THE PRIVILEGE OF WILDERNESS IN COMFORT AND STYLE**

*National Geographic Sea Lion* has been transformed: the lounge, bar, and dining room have been handsomely renovated. And every cabin category has been refreshed with warm cherry veneer, our signature bed linens, sleekly framed photos, and more. Now, the ship sets new standards for expedition hospitality and comfort.
SPECIAL OFFER

Bring the Kids: We believe sharing an expedition with your kids or grandkids is a life-enhancing experience. So, take $500 off the double occupancy price for each person under 18.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Costs Include: Accommodations aboard ship; all meals and nonalcoholic beverages aboard ship; shore excursions, sightseeing, and entrance fees; transfers to/from airport if traveling on group flights; use of kayaks and snorkeling gear; taxes, service charges, and gratuities (except to ship’s crew); services of Lindblad Expeditions’ natural history staff and a ship physician.

Not Included: Airfare; passport and visa fees; travel protection plan; items of a personal nature such as alcoholic beverages, voyage DVD, email, and laundry; gratuities to ship’s crew at your discretion.

Airfare: Airfare is an additional cost. Sample airfares are subject to change. Lindblad Expeditions will gladly assist in making your air arrangements for a $50 per person service fee.

Reservations: To confirm your place, an advance payment of US$850 per person is payable by check, Visa, MasterCard, American Express, or Discover.

Final Payment: Due no later than 90 days prior to departure.

Insurance: Trip cancellation/interruption insurance is highly recommended and should be considered for your financial protection. Also important, especially if you are traveling internationally, is medical insurance and emergency medical evacuation coverage. A comprehensive package will be made available to you upon receipt of your initial deposit. Early purchase may provide coverage of preexisting medical problems.

Smoking Policy: Allowed only in designated outdoor areas.

Responsibility and Other Terms & Conditions: Certain other provisions concerning, among other things, limitations of Lindblad Maritime Enterprises and UCLA Alumni Association’s liability for loss of property, injury, illness, or death during the voyage will be provided to all guests on the ship’s ticket sent prior to departure or upon request. By registering for a trip, the guest agrees to all such terms and conditions.

Prices listed in this brochure are as of publication date, and are subject to change. Lindblad Maritime Enterprises and UCLA Alumni Association reserve the right to impose surcharges based on increases in the actual cost of fuel.

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We strongly recommend that you purchase a travel protection plan.
Reservation Form:  
Whales & Wildness:  
Spring in the Sea of Cortez  
April 11-18, 2016  |  Aboard National Geographic Sea Lion

Please reserve ____________ place(s)

Name 1: _____________________________________________________________  
(As it appears on passport)

Name 2: _____________________________________________________________  
(As it appears on passport)

Name 1: ______________________________ Date of Birth: ____________________  
(Preferred name for name badge)

Name 2: ______________________________ Date of Birth: ____________________  
(Preferred name for name badge)

Street Address:  ________________________________________________________

City: ________________________________ State: _______________ ZIP: ________

Home Phone: ____________________ Business Phone: ____________________

Cell Phone: ______________________________ Fax: ______________________

Email:  ________________________________________________

Accommodations: ☐ Double  ☐ Single  ☐ Twin share w/friend: ______________________

☐ Share with roommate assigned by tour operator

Please indicate choice of cabin category in order of preference:

1st choice: ______________________  2nd choice: ___________________________

☐ Enclosed is my advance payment of $ __________ (850 per person). Check made payable to Lindblad Maritime Enterprises, Ltd.

☐ Charge my advance payment of $ __________ (850 per person) to my  
  ☐ Visa  ☐ MasterCard  ☐ American Express or ☐ Discover.

Account Number: ______________________________ Expires: __________________

Cardholder Signature: __________________________ Date: _________________

I accept the conditions as stated in this brochure and submit my reservation(s) as indicated.

Signature: __________________________ Date: _________________

UCLA Alumni Travel is a benefit of membership in the Alumni Association. You may invite up to three companions to travel with you as a guest on your membership.

☐ Yes I am a member of the UCLA Alumni Association

☐ No, I am not a member. Please send me an application to join.
Expedition Highlights

▶ Explore the Sea of Cortez, a UNESCO World Heritage site, at the best time of year.

▶ Travel aboard a newly redesigned 62-guest ship with expert naturalists, an undersea specialist, and a Lindblad-National Geographic certified photo instructor.

▶ See large pods of dolphins and various species of whales, as well as abundant bird life and giant cardon cacti.

▶ Kayak, swim, and snorkel with sea lions in pristine waters, and hike diverse desert landscapes.